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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000758

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: FORMER PM ALLAWI CALLS FOR SINGULAR FOCUS ON
SECURITY

REF: A. BAGHDAD 622

[B](#). BAGHDAD 612

[C](#). BAGHDAD 678

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (S) Summary: Following the February 26 approval of a draft hydrocarbons law by the Council of Ministers, the Ambassador discussed next steps on other key political priorities with Former PM Allawi February 27. Allawi contented that security should be the one and only priority and called USG pressure for fast action on political issues such as hydrocarbons and provincial elections laws counterproductive. Allawi also brief the Ambassador on his progress to establish a broad moderate coalition. End summary.

Hydrocarbons, U.S. Should Back Off

[2](#). (C) The Ambassador characterized the recent hydrocarbons success as setting an important precedent for Iraqis working together in a unifying manner (ref A). Allawi disagreed; he called U.S. efforts to reach a compromise on hydrocarbons a "waste of time," and predicted the draft will have problems in the Council of Representatives (CoR), and cause strife in the implementation. The former PM advised the USG to step back pressure on the GOI to push through a whole list of political items and focus single-mindedly on security. The Ambassador said that our next priorities are de-Ba'athification and militias, both of which have a direct impact on the security situation.

De-Ba'athification, an issue of Force Protection

[3](#). (C) Allawi said that Sunni VP and IIP chief Tariq al-Hashimi said to him on February 25 that he had read the draft de-Ba'athification law and agrees with it. The Ambassador said that he planned to meet in the next day or so with SCIRI VP Abdel Mehdi to elicit his support, and that President Talibani has already blessed the draft 'as is.' Allawi and the Ambassador agreed that de-ba'athification reform was a critical component in establishing security.

Militias

[4](#). (S) The Ambassador asked Allawi for his views and those of his Iraqiyya party as the U.S. works to develop a plan to deal with militias. Allawi commented that this effort was "way overdue," and suggested that insurgent groups also be treated as militias. The former PM promised to forward Iraqiyya's ideas to the Embassy in the next few days, which

he said focus on amnesty and reintegration.

Gathering a Moderate Coalition

¶15. (C) Allawi said he was still engaged in discussions with numerous political parties on formation of a broad moderate coalition aimed as "rebalancing" the Iraqi political scene (ref B). Tawafuq is still considering joining the effort, said Allawi, adding that discussions are on-going with a variety of players including Deputy PM Barham Salih, parts of the Da'wa party, and Fadhila. He also said he was approaching potential partners from outside the Parliament.

SCIRI/Badr and Iran Inseparable

¶16. (S) Allawi said that despite SCIRI's protest, many Iraqis in Najaf were actually "jubilant" about the February 23 detention of SCIRI leader Abdul Aziz Hakim's son, Ammar Hakim, by coalition forces (ref C). He said that Abdul Aziz does not enjoy the same respect among the population in Shia centers Najaf and Kerbala as had his brother Mohamed Bakr, and that "they refer to Ammar as (Saddam Hussein's son) Uday."

¶17. (S) On U.S. efforts to wrestle SCIRI away from Iran, particularly concerning SCIRI/Badr funding and infiltration by Iranian intelligence organizations, Allawi said that "the two cannot be separated." Abdul Aziz, Allawi explained, was known as the "intelligence guy" before his brother's assassination. The former PM maintained that, lacking any

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real Iraqi base, without Iranian funding and support SCIRI would "be finished in a year."

Comment

¶18. (C) Allawi's efforts to form a moderate coalition continue to evolve. He appears to be casting a wider net to include figures outside of the CoR. The players who fall within the '80-member' alliance also continue to shift, as Allawi claimed all 15 Fadhila seats firmly within his camp on February 22, but said this time negotiations with Fadhila are ongoing. Who might make up this coalition and what platform it would advocate remains, for the time being, very much in the discussion stage. End comment.
KHALILZAD